

apuntes

Reflexiones teológicas desde el contexto Hispano-Latino

**La Madre Elenita y los Hermanos Cheos:
un acercamiento al catolicismo popular**

Iván R. Buxeda Díaz, Ph. D.

**Early Methodist Episcopal Missions in Brazil:
The Immigrant Connection**

Josefrayn Sanchez-Perry

**Book Review
In the Country of Empty Crosses:
The Story of a Hispano Protestant Family
in Catholic New Mexico**

David Maldonado

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From the Editor

Popular Religiosity and Missionary efforts are perceived by some historians and theologians as mutually exclusive practices; however other scholars in the field would argue that one of these elements leads to the other, and of course some would argue that mission work takes precedence, while others will affirm that popular religion precedes all types of missionary intervention. In this issue of *Apuntes*, the articles we have selected for publication do not attempt to solve these tensions; rather the articles deal with these aspects and tensions by examining and looking at two particular situations, and based on these two cases, the authors offer their perspectives grounded in historical and cultural analysis of two religious communities in Latin America.

The first article offers insights and observations regarding a historical movement--an expression in popular religiosity in the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico at the beginning of the twentieth century. The author of this article is, Dr. Iván R. Buxeda Díaz, who obtained a doctoral degree in Latin American and Puerto Rican History from Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras; and a M. Div. from Seminario Episcopal San Pedro y San Pablo y del Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico. In addition to these degrees, Dr. Buxeda Díaz holds a M. Education in History from Universidad de Puerto Rico. Dr. Buxeda Díaz has served as a Priest at Parroquia La Resurrección de Manatí and at Parroquia San Pedro y San Pablo de Bayamón. In addition to these ministerial positions; he also serves as a professor at Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Arecibo and at Universidad Interamericana, Recinto de Arecibo.

The author of the second article is Mr. Josefrayn Sánchez-Perry, who is a Master of Divinity candidate at Perkins School of Theology. He obtained a BA in Religion from Northwestern College; and in addition to his studies at Perkins, he worked for the Mexican American Program and the Center for the Study of Latino/a Christianity & Religions at Southern Methodist University. Upon graduation, Mr. Sánchez-Perry hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in the History of World Christianity. Mr. Sánchez-Perry's article provides an insightful analysis of Methodist missionary efforts in Brazil and their connections to English immigrants.

In addition to these articles, this edition *Apuntes* includes a book review, written by Dr. David Maldonado, who has served in multiple leadership and academic positions, most recently he served as the Director of The Center for the Study of Latino/a Theology and Religions at Perkins School of Theology-SMU. Dr. Maldonado's book review is a very welcome addition to this edition of *Apuntes* and we invite others to do the same for our future editions. I hope these articles and book review will be a source of encouragement and that their insights will provide a potential response to some of our ministerial and academic dilemmas.

La Madre Elenita y los Hermanos Cheos: un acercamiento al catolicismo popular

Iván R. Buxeda Díaz, Ph. D.

¡Oh María Madre mía líbrame de morir en pecado,
por la sabiduría que te concedió el Hijo!

Oración de las Tres Ave Marías
Congregación Misionera de San Juan Evangelista

Introducción:

El ensayo La Madre Elenita y los Hermanos Cheos: un acercamiento al catolicismo popular define y explora un suceso poco conocido dentro de la Iglesia Católica Romana que ocurrió durante los primeros años del siglo XX en el municipio de San Lorenzo por un período de diez años.

Se elabora una discusión del movimiento de los Hermanos Cheos que coincide con la aparición de la madre Elenita de Jesús. Ambas tendencias tenían unas características morales y milenaristas que se dieron en una sociedad que atravesaba por cambios políticos, económicos y sociales impactada por la invasión norteamericana de 1898 y el establecimiento del nuevo régimen en la Isla.

Los Hermanos Cheos detuvieron el avance del protestantismo en la zona rural del centro montañoso de Puerto Rico por cierto tiempo. El declinar de los Cheos ocurrió con la entrada y consolidación de la Iglesia Pentecostal en 1917.

¿Quién fue Elenita de Jesús?

Elenita nació en España donde estudio en un convento de monjas y llegó a Puerto Rico el 8 de agosto de 1899 coincidiendo con el año del huracán San Ciriaco acaecido el 7 de agosto, 1899. Dicho huracán causó la muerte de 3,369 personas y los daños estimados fueron de 35.8 millones.¹ De San Juan, Elenita se trasladó a Caguas. Los testigos que la conocieron indican que era una mujer de unos cinco pies de alto, delgada de unas 100 libras de peso, de tez blanca, bien cariñosa y amable, de buen humor, ojos claros y buena sonrisa. Ella era soltera y no tenía familia inmediata. El nombre oficial de ella aparece en el único documento histórico donde esta registrada el acta de defunción que se conserva en el Municipio de San Lorenzo. Su nombre era Elena Huge, hija de Emilio Huge. Se le conoció con el nombre de la “Madre Elenita”, “vuestra madre” o “vuestra madre redentora”. Ella falleció de debilidad general el 29 de septiembre, 1909.

Al llegar al Barrio Espino de San Lorenzo, Elenita tenía 25 años de edad era una joven soltera de profundas convicciones religiosas y era una predicadora muy carismática. Ella era muy recta y lo que Elenita decía se hacía inspirando respeto y santidad. No solamente evangelizaba, sino que tenía una escuela para enseñar a leer y escribir donde las jóvenes aprendían tareas domésticas. Su labor de evangelización la realizó en los barrios de San Lorenzo, Cayey, Patillas, Arroyo, Guayama y Yabucoa. Algunas

¹ Stuart B. Schwartz, “The Hurricane of San Ciriaco: Disaster, Politics and Society in Puerto Rico, 1899-1901”, Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 72 (3), 1992: 303-320.

personas dicen que predicó en el barrio Beatriz y en el barrio San Salvador de Caguas.

Unos testigos afirman que utilizaba el hábito marrón de la Virgen del Carmen. La devoción a la Virgen del Carmen fue propagada en Puerto Rico por la Orden Carmelita que tenía sacerdotes y monjas. Al utilizar el hábito de las carmelitas se puede identificar el escapulario sobre el cuello de la persona con la imagen bendecida de la Virgen del Carmen. Este aspecto señala un ordenamiento ritual y práctico que salvaguarde el significado de su misión entre los campesinos.

Ella tenía a su alrededor un círculo de niñas entre 6 y 20 años, todas ellas vírgenes. Solamente esas niñas podían tocarla (¿?).

En torno a Elenita se estableció una especie de espacio sagrado que la separaba del mundo profano de sus seguidores. Según informes de varios testigos, Elenita podía aparecer y desaparecer milagrosamente; podía levitar y continuamente se aislaba en la casa en que vivía. Cuando iba a realizar alguna misión a otros barrios, no caminaba sino que era cargada en una hamaca o llevada en una silla que era atada a unos varales los que ponían sobre sus hombros sus seguidores.²

Para enfatizar su estado divino, Elenita instruyó a sus seguidores sobre lo que ella llamó "*su cambio*", es decir, su experiencia de muerte que no sería como las demás personas, "pues como Ángel del Señor sólo daría un cambio". En el caso de Elenita, el culto a la Virgen María le proveyó de los

² Véase, www.buenaventurapr.com/documents/libro_del_padre_jaime.pdf

elementos discursivos y simbólicos que modelaron su misión y conciencia religiosa.

A finales del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX, el partido de San Lorenzo en la zona rural vivía en condiciones de extrema pobreza, no gozaban de agua potable y de condiciones sanitarias. La tenencia de la propiedad rural se concentraba en manos de pocas personas. La mayor parte de las personas vivían arrimados en fincas de terratenientes. Era común entre las personas convivir sin contraer matrimonio por la Iglesia (amancebamiento).

La primera vez que vieron a Elenita dos campesinos intentaban salvar un ganado mientras flotaba sobre el mar frente a la costa del municipio de Maunabo. Uno de las personas que conoció a Elenita fue Adolfo Ruiz Medina, jefe de una cuadrilla de leñadores en el bosque Carite de San Lorenzo posteriormente este sitio se nombra como el Santuario Diocesano de la Santa Montaña en la Diócesis de Caguas. En una ladera de ese sitio, Elenita colocó una cruz sobre el peñasco. Elenita se hizo llamar “su buenaventura” para ese tiempo. Entre sus seguidores se creía que ella era la encarnación de la Virgen del Carmen. También se identificaba con términos marianos: “reina del cielo y Tierra” (María Regina) y “madre de todos los hombres” (María Mater).

Los discípulos de Elenita atestiguan que una vez terminada la prédica, ella llevaba a grandes grupos de personas para recibir los sacramentos, a las Parroquias de Caguas, San Lorenzo, Cayey, Yabucoa, Patillas y Guayama. Ella les daba el dinero para el pago de estipendios y los enviaba en su

nombre donde el párroco. De 1901 hasta el 29 de septiembre, 1909 Elenita estuvo viviendo en la cima de la Montaña durante ocho años. Ella tenía una casa en el lado sur. Ella se condujo como una madre con las personas que la visitaban y los que iban a escuchar sus prédicas. Ella se destacó por la organización de las siembras de las fincas indicándoles a las personas qué y cuándo sembrar. Se le atribuye a Elenita el leer el pensamiento de las personas, aparecer y desaparecer como un rayo de luz o convertida en paloma, estar sin comer por un gran tiempo, sanar o profetizar, entre otras manifestaciones carismáticas. En una ocasión, cortó su pelo y distribuyó a varias personas unas cruces de cedro envueltos en tela gruesa a manera de detentes. Cuando Elenita asume la identidad de la Virgen, no es una decisión consciente ni gratuita. Es la conjunción, por un lado, de un grupo de seres humanos para quienes el mito y la simbología de María satisfacían una poderosa demanda de protección, de sostén y amparo, por otro lado, una mujer para quien el mito de la Virgen y su maternidad espiritual le ofrecía los elementos discursivos y simbólicos para articular un mensaje de redención.³ Esa protección y amparo era necesaria en un momento de amenaza o crisis ante el fin del régimen español y la entrada del régimen estadounidense en 1898.

³ Nélida Agosto Cintrón, "Genero y discurso religioso en dos movimientos carismáticos en Puerto Rico", Fundamentos, Facultad de Estudios Generales, U.P.R., Núms. 5-6, 1997-1998: 97-124.

La investigación más completa sobre la madre Elenita es de la autoría del P. Jaime Reyes, OSB, La Santa Montaña de San Lorenzo, P. R. y el misterio de Elenita de Jesús, 1899-1909 publicado en 1992.⁴ El Padre Jaime, un sacerdote benedictino del Monasterio de Humacao recopiló el testimonio de cientos de testigos oculares durante la investigación que llevó a cabo a instancias del monseñor Enrique Hernández, obispo de la Diócesis de Caguas para intentar determinar la identidad y el alcance de la obra de Elenita de Jesús. Las personas entrevistadas estaban convencidas que Elenita era la virgen María. Se dice que ella derramó sus gracias sobre sus discípulos y realizó una gran cantidad de prodigios ocurridos en el Cerro Las Peñas actualmente conocido como el Santuario de La Santa Montaña. La investigación sobre este incidente se condujo de 1978 a 1988. En inglés, recomendando la lectura del historiador Reinaldo L. Román.⁵

Los Hermanos Cheos

El suceso de Elenita es contemporáneo con el surgimiento de los Hermanos Cheos. Para enero, 1902, José de los Santos Morales comenzó a predicar en el barrio Arrozales de Arecibo. En enero de 1903, José Rodríguez Medina predicaba en el barrio Bateyes de Utuado. A Santos Morales sus seguidores lo consideraban el “hombre-dios”, “ángel caído del

⁴ Jaime M. F. Reyes, La Santa Montaña de San Lorenzo, P. R. y el misterio de Elenita de Jesús, 1899-1909 (México, D. F.: Siglo XX, 1992). Este libro fue censurado debido a errores doctrinales por la jerarquía católica.

⁵ Véase, Reinaldo L. Román, “Governing Spirits in Puerto Rico: Elenita and the Hermanos Cheos” en Governing Spirits: Religion, Miracles and Spectacles in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898-1956 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 51-81.

cielo” y la “encarnación de San Juan Evangelista”. Santos tenía un carácter fuerte y autoritario propio de los héroes mesiánicos. Santos estuvo predicando desde los 16 años en 1902 hasta 1912, año en que desapareció. En 1913, fundó en Jayuya su capilla denominada “el trono” y murió en 1939.

Se dice que Elenita dejó una carta a los Hermanos Cheos para que a los cinco años de su muerte en 1914, la sacarán del panteón y la llevaran a enterrar a la capilla de la Santa Montaña. Hay constancia histórica sobre este particular, pues los Hermanos Cheos estaban predicando en la Santa Montaña de San Lorenzo en 1914.

Se considera el surgimiento del movimiento de los Cheos en un momento de crisis que experimentó la sociedad puertorriqueña con la invasión norteamericana de 1898 y la entrada del protestantismo. Los Hermanos Cheos desarrollaron sus actividades en el área sur y centro de la Isla, hacia el este en las áreas de plantaciones azucareras y en la zona montañosa cafetalera desde Peñuelas a San Lorenzo y desde Ponce a Corozal.

Hay una amenaza sobre el orden simbólico y normativo que había articulado la vida de los puertorriqueños hasta ese momento. José de los Santos Morales exortaba a sus seguidores a: “formar un ejército de campesinos y defender con las armas la fe católica heredada de los ancestros”.

Las creencias y prácticas religiosas contenidas en el catolicismo popular eran importantes para el campesinado en la elaboración de un movimiento

para encarar la amenaza de la invasión norteamericana y la ocupación militar de la Isla.

Un aspecto importante en el catolicismo popular es la actividad religiosa del creyente que se centra en los santos y la Virgen María como las instancias religiosas objeto del culto cotidiano. Se recurre al culto de los santos de palo y las devociones marianas como el rosario para que ayuden y socorran a las personas en sus problemas y dificultades. Los santos tienen una devoción individual, pues se especializan en problemas particulares y cada cual tiene su parcela de acción, así como sus devotos.

Hay un momento de crisis en los primeros años del siglo XX en la sociedad puertorriqueña, que dio lugar al surgimiento de predicadores itinerantes que ofrecían un mensaje de esperanza y profecía. A los Cheos se les llama "*los inspirados*". Es la primera vez en un movimiento católico de laicos donde la mujer tiene una participación significativa. Hay varias mujeres que ingresaron al movimiento Cheo.

Hay que señalar que la Madre Elenita y los Cheos son dos movimientos diferentes en la Iglesia Católica, pero guardan cierta relación por el momento histórico en que surgieron. Desafortunadamente, el suceso de la Madre Elenita tuvo una corta duración de diez años y desapareció con su muerte. Los Cheos llegan hasta nuestros días, aunque su auge y desarrollo fue detenido por la entrada de la Iglesia Pentecostal.

La mejor definición sobre los Cheos es la siguiente: “El movimiento de los Hermanos Cheos fue una genuina manifestación deresistencia del Catolicismo popular ante el advenimiento del Protestantismo”.⁶

Desde un principio este movimiento manifestó un claro carácter milenario, similar a los que ocurrieron en muchas sociedades que experimentaron grandes convulsiones sociales. Los movimientos mesiánicos o milenarios son aquellos que expresan simbólicamente la destrucción (mediante la acción divina) de un sistema social que se percibe como odioso e insoportable por los miembros del grupo o la sociedad y el establecimiento de un nuevo orden de cosas que traerá justicia, felicidad y bienestar para el grupo. El énfasis en la destrucción de ese orden conlleva generalmente la presencia de un agente divino o mesías, que conducirá al pueblo o grupo oprimido a la salvación y el disfrute del orden perfecto venidero.⁷

Las sociedades susceptibles de producir estos movimientos religiosos son aquellos donde predominan estructuras y valores caracterizados por las relaciones interpersonales, como son las relaciones de parentesco y donde el poder es visto como una fuerza personal y no como una fuerza objetiva e impersonal. Estas sociedades campesinas son generalmente analfabetas y homogéneas llegando a interpretar los fenómenos sociales en términos y nociones mágico-religiosas y las respuestas que desarrollan ante

⁶ Nélida Agosto Cintrón, Religión y cambio social en Puerto Rico (1898-1940) (Río Piedras: Editorial Huracán, 1996), 74.

⁷ Ibid., 75. Véase, Ángel López Cantos, La religiosidad popular en Puerto Rico: siglo XVIII (San Juan: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 1993).

los trastornos y cambios experimentados toman la forma de expresiones simbólicas y religiosas.⁸ Según Nélida Agosto Cintrón: “El movimiento de los Hermanos Cheos fue la respuesta, expresada en el lenguaje de la religión popular, que dio el campesinado puertorriqueño del centro de la Isla a la invasión norteamericana, percibida ésta como una amenaza de destrucción de la sociedad y cultura puertorriqueña”.

Los Cheos ofrecían mensajes de carácter escatológico y moralista en los que profetizaban el fin del mundo y llamaban a la gente a dejar de pecar, a casarse por la Iglesia y a acudir a los templos católicos a oír misa y recibir los sacramentos. En el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX resultaba complicado cumplir con los sacramentos, pues conllevaba trámites y el pago de cuotas altas. Por eso, las personas del interior rural optaban por el amancebamiento o unión consensual y relegaban la oficialización del vínculo matrimonial para cuando se presentara una oportunidad que pocas veces llegaba.

Al principio, el movimiento de los Cheos no fue aceptado por algunos sacerdotes, según expresa el Padre Francisco Vicario en 1909 al escribir un artículo “El diablo predicador”.⁹ Se catalogaba a los Cheos de: “*espiritistas, locos o fanatizados*”. Ese sacerdote señalaba que muchas de las misiones de los Cheos se parecían demasiado a los avivamientos pentecostales que para esa época comenzaban sus actividades religiosas.

⁸ Ibid., 76. Véase, Fernando Picó, “El catolicismo popular en el Puerto Rico del siglo 19” en Ángel G. Quintero Rivera (Ed.) Virgenes, magos y escapularios. Imaginería, etnicidad y religiosidad popular en Puerto Rico (San Juan: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, UPR, Universidad del Sagrado Corazón y Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades, 1998).

⁹ Santaella, Op. Cit., 78-81.

La distinción que se hacía entre los sacerdotes de “católico” y “católico cheo” es evidente la no-aceptación en sus comienzos del movimiento Cheo por la ortodoxia católica. El obispo William A. Jones mostró tolerancia con los Cheos y considero que era mejor observar y esperar en vez que reprimirlo. En 1916, se realizó un informe oficial al Obispo Jones ofreciendo una opinión tolerante y favorable a los Cheos. En 1927, la Iglesia Católica reconoció oficialmente el movimiento de los Cheos y tomaron el nombre de Asociación Católica, Apostólica, Romana de San Juan Evangelista como una organización de laicos consagrados. Los Cheos ayudaron a fundar 42 capillas en la zona rural del centro de la Isla en 13 municipios.¹⁰

La decadencia de los Cheos se debió a los cambios introducidos por el nuevo régimen estadounidense que trajeron la adopción de nuevos patrones económicos y sociales. Además, las Iglesias Protestantes Históricas comenzaron a enviar misioneros a diversas partes de la zona rural de Puerto Rico y establecieron una división del territorio misionero que facilitó la evangelización y la asimilación.¹¹ El descenso de los Cheos coincidió con el surgimiento de las luchas nacionalistas-albizuistas en los años veinte y treinta que sirvieron para articular la resistencia al régimen estadounidense

¹⁰ Santaella, *Op. Cit.*, 235-240. Véase, Lilliam del C. Rodríguez Pérez, La obra de los Hermanos Cheos, 1902-1927. Tesis de M. A., Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 1994.

¹¹ Véase, Donald T. Moore, Puerto Rico para Cristo: A History of the Progress of the Evangelical Missions on the Island of Puerto Rico (Cuernavaca, México: Centro Intercultural de Documentación (Sondeos-Núm. 43), 1969.

por ciertos sectores de la sociedad puertorriqueña en el Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico.¹²

Lo que más contribuyó al declinar de los Cheos fue el establecimiento de la Iglesia Pentecostal en 1916 por su carácter fundamentalista y radical llenando las necesidades de los sectores más pobres de la sociedad puertorriqueña.

El Pentecostalismo tenía una forma de culto más personal y directa que valora la espontaneidad y la experiencia más intensa de carga emotiva. Además, los pentecostales hablaban el idioma del pueblo empleando el culto y la música para dejarse sentir y crear una expresión de fe. Los pentecostales no respetaron la división del territorio misionero establecida por las principales iglesias protestantes históricas a partir de 1898. Los misioneros norteamericanos resentían que los pentecostales se establecían en cualquier sitio e invadían barrios y sectores marginales.¹³

La expresión en el pueblo puertorriqueño: “*te dieron como pandereta de aleluya*” refleja el tono popular y simbólico que impactó el culto pentecostal en muchas personas al identificar la música, los coritos y la repetición de citas bíblicas con esa práctica.¹⁴

¹² Marisa Rosado, El nacionalismo y la violencia en la década de 1930 (Colombia: Ediciones Puerto, 2007); Luis Ferrao, “Pedro Albizu Campos, el Partido Nacionalista y el catolicismo”, Homines, Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Vols. 13-14, agosto de 1989-agosto de 1990: 224-247.

¹³ Ellen Walsh, Advancing the Kingdom: Missionaries and Americanization of Puerto Rico, 1898-1930. Tesis doctoral. University of Pittsburg, 2008.

¹⁴ Iván R. Buxeda Díaz, “Como pandereta de aleluya”: la pentecostalización del protestantismo. Horizontes. Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito de Vega Alta, agosto, 2003: 22.

El mensaje pentecostal de abandonar el mundo probó ser congruente con la condición de marginalidad del trabajador rural. Fue entre los grupos marginados y excluidos aquellos que no tenían participación activa ni significativa en los procesos socioeconómicos donde mayor arraigo encontró el pentecostalismo. Pues, les proveyó a estos grupos sociales de medios de expresión significativos compensando la falta de oportunidades y participación en las estructuras de poder. Es natural que unos grupos sociales que nunca habían tenido la experiencia de articular sus luchas en movimientos políticos o sindicales, utilizaron el vehículo que tenían a su disposición: el medio pentecostal y su discurso simbólico.

La Iglesia Pentecostal, M. I. fue de las primeras iglesias en Puerto Rico en lograr el sostenimiento económico y tuvo una mejor adaptación a la cultura que las Iglesias Protestantes Históricas que procedían de Estados Unidos.¹⁵

Conclusión:

El catolicismo popular puertorriqueño surgió de la sabiduría de nuestros jibaros humildes. Las mejores manifestaciones de ese catolicismo popular al margen de la iglesia oficial fue el suceso de la madre Elenita de Jesús en la Santa Montaña de San Lorenzo.

¹⁴ Iván R. Buxeda Díaz, "Como pandereta de aleluya": la pentecostalización del protestantismo. Horizontes. Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito de Vega Alta, agosto, 2003: 22.

¹⁵ Sobre el tema de las finanzas de las iglesias, véase, Michael Sáenz, Economic Aspects of Church Development: A Study of the Policies and Procedures of the Major Protestants Groups in Puerto Rico, 1897-1957. Tesis doctoral. University of Pennsylvania, 1961.

Los Hermanos Cheos responde a un laicado militante de carácter moral y milenarista. Otras manifestaciones del catolicismo popular que no he podido discutir en este ensayo son la devoción de la Virgen de la Monserrate en Hormigueros y la Virgen del Pozo en Sabana Grande. Estos temas merecen un estudio abarcador y relacionarlos con otros movimientos como la Congregación Mita bajo el liderato de Juanita García Peraza, quien fue expulsada de la Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal, M. I. y fundó una iglesia independiente en 1940.¹⁶

Las características principales del catolicismo popular son las devociones marianas y el culto a los santos. Ese catolicismo popular rico en tradiciones y folclore tiene un sentido nacionalista que se expresa en otras manifestaciones marianas como la declaración de la Virgen de la Providencia como patrona de Puerto Rico.

El fenómeno de la Madre Elenita tuvo una corta duración de diez años y terminó con su muerte. El movimiento de los Cheos fue frenado con el surgimiento y desarrollo de la Iglesia Pentecostal. Actualmente, los Hermanos Cheos tienen una casa de retiros en Peñuelas y se mantienen activos dentro de la Iglesia Católica.

No encontré una vinculación entre los Cheos y alguna tendencia política bajo el período bajo estudio. Difiero de la opinión de varios autores como:

¹⁶ Véase, "Bienvenido a la Congregación Mita", <http://www.congregacionmita.org> de 1926 a 1929.

Samuel Silva Gotay, Nélida Agosto Cintrón y Luis O. Zayas Micheli.¹⁷ Los Cheos no tuvieron una vinculación política significativa a diferencia de otros grupos surgidos en la Iglesia Católica como los Cristeros en México de 1926 a 1929 . El suceso de los Cristeros fue un conflicto armado entre el gobierno de Plutarco Elías Calles y milicias de laicos, presbíteros y religiosos católicos que resistieron la aplicación de legislación y políticas públicas orientadas a restringir a la Iglesia Católica sobre los bienes mexicanos así como en procedimientos civiles.

Abstract

This essay discusses two important aspects regarding the Roman Catholic Church in Puerto Rico, first it provides an analysis of Mother Elenita--a woman in the town of San Lorenzo; and second it provides insights from Hermanos Cheos--a lay order in the Church of itinerant preachers known by the names of the saint who "inspired" them to defend the Catholic faith from Protestantism in the island after 1898.

¹⁷ Samuel Silva Gotay, "Los movimientos de predicadores laicos católicos en la montaña y en los pueblos de la ruralía, como la fuerza que salvó al campo para la Iglesia Católica" en Catolicismo y política en Puerto Rico. Bajo España y Estados Unidos, siglos XIX y XX (San Juan: Editorial de la U.P. R., 2005), 313-323. Nélida Agosto Cintrón, "Género y discurso religioso en un movimiento carismático en Puerto Rico: la Madre Elenita de la Santa Montaña" en Silvia Álvarez Curbelo, Mary Frances Gallart y Carmen I. Raffucci (Eds.), Los arcos de la memoria: el '98 de los pueblos puertorriqueños (San Juan: Postdata, 1998), 193-207; Zayas Micheli, Loc. Cit., Catolicismo popular en Puerto Rico.

Early Methodist Episcopal Missions in Brazil: The Immigrant Connection

Josefrayn Sanchez-Perry

These self-named missionaries have been among us for nearly two years . . . inviting one and all to Protestantism, and most especially to embrace the sect of Methodists, who are the most modern, troublemaking, loose, fanatical, hypocritical and ignorant of all Protestants.

—Father Perereca, Brazilian Catholic Priest¹

I. Introduction

The presence of Methodism in Brazil can be traced to a number of Protestant legitimations of missional work instigated during the nineteenth century. Of course, the emergence of this endeavor did not transpire without religious and cultural polemics. Only few of the pioneering missionary women and men, if at all, actually attempted to transmit the gospel outside their Protestant group. They did, however, manage to make a connection with immigrants who had traveled to Brazil for reasons other than evangelism. Like other Protestants in the rest of the world, Methodists in Brazil made acquaintances with merchants that followed the commerce

¹ In accordance with José Carlos Barbosa, *Slavery and Protestant Missions in Imperial Brazil: "The Black Does not Enter the Church, He Peeks in from Outside"*, translated by Fraser G. MacHaffie and Richard K. Danford, (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), 11; for original source see: Luíz Gonçalves dos Santos, *O Catolico e o Metodista*, (Rio De Janeiro: Imprensa Americana de I.P. da Costa & Col., 1838), xxiv. As an additional note, my greatest evident obstacle here and throughout this paper will be my lack of knowledge of the Portuguese language; as a result, much of the literature concerning Catholic Brazilians will be from translated second-hand sources.

avenues between European and South American countries. A connection with Brazilian nationals² did not happen until subsequent, and more impetuous missionaries arrived in Brazil; and these had the knowledge of their predecessors.

When Protestant proselytization occurred, almost always, some religious disputes arose. The comment from Father Perereca represents one of the greatest religious impediments that Methodist would face when they made an effort to share their heart-felt religion with Brazilian nationals. But this would not be the case every time. One early Methodist missionary, in particular, managed to exert his ability to communicate and advertise the Christian message in ways that his predecessors did not imagine. This essay will attempt to document the early Methodist Episcopal history in Brazil between 1835 and 1841, taking into consideration (1) how the immigrant connection affected missionary homogenization, and also (2) the relationship with Roman Catholic clergy during the distribution of the bible and other Christian paraphernalia.

This delineation and illustration of history is important because it makes the case that North American missions did (and still do) not always begin by a first hand contact with indigenous or native people. The Methodist Episcopal Church shows us quite the opposite, in fact. Missions of this nature represent the connection that Christianity has with colonial and neo-colonial economic enterprises. This was particularly evident toward the end of the Civil War in the United States, when missionaries from the

² When I say "nationals," I mean the people from the specified country.

Methodist Episcopal Church, South, would eventually move to Brazil in order to minister to those who insisted in maintaining the practice of slavery. In the minds of these later missionaries, of course, slavery did not go unchallenged.

II. The First Voyage (1835-1836)

The early Methodist missions into South America were supported by the Methodist Episcopal Church, before the denominational schism of 1844. Officially beginning in 1835, Rev. *Fountain E. Pitts* (1808-1874) answered the call to be the pioneering Methodist missionary in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.³ In a letter sent from Brazil to the Secretary Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Pitts described that he hosted Methodist meetings, and even preached in dwelling houses, supplying “the little band of Methodist” with hymnbooks and Disciplines.⁴ A representation of the early homogenization of Methodist missionaries in Brazil is illustrated here. When Pitts celebrated the remarkable developments in Brazil, he clearly stressed that these Methodist literary resources circulated among the students of “a flourishing English school.” He does not, in other words, assert any contact among Brazilian nationals. Since Pitts also identified the grand need for literary material in the vernacular for distribution purposes, by logical presupposition, the early audience that Pitts was able to gather

³ Maynard, Edwin and J. Richard Spann, “Pitts, Fountain E.,” vol. 2 in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, edited by Nolan B. Harmon, 1918-1919 (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 1918.

⁴ Pitts, Fountain E., “Missionary Intelligence: A Call for Missionaries” in *Christian Advocate and Journal* vol. 10 (December 1835): 58; the letter is only one page.

must have been English-speaking, and not part of the national peoples of Brazil.⁵

The Church of England, in fact, had been established in Brazil before the modern missionary enterprises of the Protestant churches in the nineteenth century.⁶ During Brazil's opening of international commerce in 1808, Anglicans (and also Lutheran Churches) were given special permission to nourish the spiritual needs of immigrants; but their worship buildings were not allowed to have church-like architecture.⁷ Brazil would not declare its independence until 1822; and therefore, the religious toleration with which Portugal (in Brazil) accepted Anglican missionaries was due to a similar situation that happened in Britain with Portuguese immigrants during the Napoleonic wars. By acknowledging the presence of British and German immigrants in Brazil, Pitts identified, and therefore bore witness, that the initial Methodist missionary engagement in Brazil was with (non-Iberian) immigrants from English descent.⁸

The Protestant homogenization that Pitts exemplifies was normative among pioneering missionaries. Interestingly, from the resources that are

⁵ According to Braga, Erasmo & Kenneth G. Grubb, *The Republic of Brazil: A Survey of the Religious Situation*, (London: World Dominion Press, 1932), 48.

⁶ Braga and Grub, 48.

⁷ Ibid, 49.

⁸ Similarly, Fletcher, James C. and Daniel P. Kidder, *Brazil and the Brazilians: Portrayed in Historical and Descriptive Sketches*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1879), felt that, under any circumstance, no mission field was more inspiring than to care for the spiritual welfare of English merchants, who "go down to the sea in ships" (Fletcher & Kidder, 202). Although Fletcher (1823-1901) was a Presbyterian minister, Daniel P. Kidder (1815-1892) would be part of the second wave of Methodist missionaries in Brazil after Fountain E. Pitts.

gathered in this paper, only few sources actually expand on the missionary work among these U.S. American and English immigrants⁹; if it is mentioned, generally, it is brief. However, the rhetoric in the report from Pitts, at least, seemed to indicate that the work being done in Brazil was “ripe unto the harvest,” even if no direct or personal evangelization among nationals was ever attempted. The identification of “ripeness” for the Christian message arises from two aspects of cultural awareness: (1) the level of liberalization, economic growth of commerce, and religious toleration among government officials in Brazil (of which none are named) that Pitts, presumably, perceived; and (2) the deficiency of “Romanism” in their evangelical tactics and episcopal authority.

In addition to this, subsequent historical and missiological writings on Pitts, moreover, do not contemporarily bother to make the distinction. In addition to this, subsequent historical and missiological writings on Pitts, moreover, do not contemporarily bother to make the distinction X disclaimers are made, the fallacy of disregarding the homogenization of North American missionaries exacerbated the worldview with which Protestant missions functioned in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Ultimately, his missionary work was short lived (1835-1836). The initial engagement among European and U.S. American immigrants in Brazil,

⁹ For more information on this topic see a number of essays on, *The Confederados: Old South Immigrants in Brazil*, edited by Dawsey, Cyrus B. and James M. Dawsey, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1995); and an article by J. M. Dawsey titled “Annie Ayres Newman Ransom (1856-1880) and Methodism in Brazil” in *Methodist History*, (April 1995): 162-172.

however, paved the way for subsequent Methodists, such as Rev. *Justin Spaulding* (1802-1865) and Rev. *Daniel P. Kidder* (1815-1891), who answered the call to continue his work. The request from Pitts exemplified his awareness of the need to evangelize in the vernacular, outside the immigrant merchants who lived in Brazil.¹⁰

III. The Second Wave (1836-1840)

Justin Spaulding attended to the Methodists in Brazil almost immediately after Pitts return to the United States, making him the first permanent Methodist missionary in Rio de Janeiro.¹¹ Daniel P. Kidder followed within the next year.¹² Recognized as the “Kidder-Spaulding Mission,” these succeeding missionaries continued the work among the English-speaking immigrants, but also managed to expand their religious message by attempting to proselytize Brazilian nationals. The initial missionary work of Spaulding, however, is not extensively documented. This may be due to the level of evangelistic excitement that Kidder ultimately engendered among English-speaking Methodists in Brazil, overshadowing any possible impetus that Spaulding may have espoused. In June of 1836, Spaulding succeeded in

¹⁰ Additionally, the missionary would be “a man of living zeal, of Job-like penance, and of true Christian philosophy . . . A preacher who will cast all his care on the Lord Jesus, and preach with ‘the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,’ is what they want here; but a dry metaphysical juggler, with superficial views of holiness of heart, will be as ineffectual as the cold moonbeam upon a mountain of ice” (Ibid).

¹¹ Reily, D. A., “Spaulding, Justin” vol. 2 in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, edited by Nolan B. Harmon, 2223, (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 2223.

¹² Rocha, Isnard, “Kidder, Daniel P.” vol. 2 in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, edited by Nolan B. Harmon, 1331-1332 (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 1331.

organizing a Sunday school of about 30 people, some of whom were Brazilians that were taught in the vernacular; and he also opened a school for English-speaking immigrant children.¹³ This appeared to be the early signs of missionary work that reached Brazilian nationals.

Kidder was an exuberant missionary. At the age of twenty-two, he raveled extensively through Brazil, distributing the scriptures and evangelistic tracts.¹⁴ It is here, of course, that much of the literary opposition from Catholic clergy began to arise. According to José Carlos Barbosa, Kidder, and almost certainly many other Protestant missionary groups, saw these religious conflicts with Catholics as positive effects.¹⁵ In the words of Kidder, the antagonism “almost always had the effect to *awaken* greater inquiry after the Bible” (emphasis added).¹⁶ This must have been the dream of any U.S. American Protestant missionary in the nineteenth century: nationals showing “they possessed religious liberty, and were determined to enjoy it,” and also displaying high levels of disdain towards “the ignorance, fanaticism, and even the immorality, which characterized some of the

¹³ Reily, 2223; see also Braga & Grubb, 53; and Morton, Doyle Ward, *Methodism in Brazil*, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1945), 10.

¹⁴ According to Morris, C. H., “The Bible in Brazil” no. 7 in *Jubilee Books*, (London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1954), even a member of the Cabinet [other sources say, Imperial Government] requested copies [of the scriptures] for a public school; and the Legislative Assembly in one of the provinces received with special satisfaction the offer of copies of the New Testament for the primary schools (Morris, 22; see also Braga and Grubb, 53; and Barbosa, 32).

¹⁵ Barbosa, 32.

¹⁶ Kidder, Daniel P., *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil: Embracing Historical and Geographical Notices of the Empire and its Several Provinces*, Vol. 2 (London: Wiley & Putnam, 1845), 140.

pretend ministers of religion.”¹⁷ Even with this large inquiry of literary material, Kidder’s dissemination must have been limited, at best, to individuals who were literate.¹⁸

Of course, Kidder was not the first to distribute bibles in the vernacular throughout Brazil. According to Morris, a translation of the scriptures by J. Ferreira de Almeida (1628-1691), which was first published in 1751 in Portugal, was widely printed and disseminated in Brazil during 1809.¹⁹ When Brazil became independent in 1822, the British and Foreign Bible society sent 2,000 Portuguese Bibles and New Testaments to Brazil.²⁰ The difference that Kidder may postulate is most likely due to the alleged biblical restrictions that the Roman Catholic Church employed. In accordance with Kidder’s son-in-law, Kidder is recorded saying that he recognized the earlier distributions of the bible “in the usual regulations of the Romish Church”. In many respects, Kidder felt his mission represented the anew dissemination of, “as far as the vulgar tongue is concerned, and

¹⁷ Kidder, 141; in context, “pretend ministers of religion,” refers to the Roman Catholic clergy.

¹⁸ Upon the publishing of Morris’ booklet, “The Bible in Brazil,” (1945) nearly 70% of the population of Brazil was illiterate. Indeed, secondary sources point out that during Kidder’s travels he sought out the most prominent citizens of the neighborhood (Braga & Grubb, 53; and Barbosa, 32); and he even managed to advertise the distribution of bibles in the newspapers (Morris, 22).

¹⁹ Morris, 12; 20.

²⁰ Ibid, 21.

effectually excluded and unknown book [the bible]”.²¹ Most clearly, Kidder functioned with particular Protestant dispositions that he was not aware of himself. His articulation of the Roman Catholic Church is by far a continuing caricature; and this is shown in the portrayal that other Methodist missionaries eventually gave the denomination.

The relationship that any nineteenth century Protestant group had in Latin America was precarious, in light of the strong Catholic sentiments throughout most of the continent. However, secondary sources point out that Kidder painstakingly observed the customs of Roman Catholic institutions and the Brazilian government.²² Although holding to Protestant dispositions of the Roman Catholic Church, Kidder's slight cultural awareness of Brazil and his anthropological interests may have been what brought about such successful missionary enterprise. His missionary ministry may have been the first Methodist movement from a homogenic English-speaking immigrant ministry to a ministry focused on Brazilian proselytization. Kidder's missionary tenacity, in fact, led him to a fruitful conversation with

²¹ Strobridge, G. E., *Biography of the Rev. Daniel Parish Kidder* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1894), 94.

²² Rocha, 1331; see also: Barbosa, 33; and Morris, 21. Although most telling is the literary works that Kidder accomplished: *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil* (1845); *Jesuits: A Historical Sketch*, (New York: Lane & Scott, 1851); *The Lives of the Popes: From A.D. 100 to A.D. 1858*, (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1853); *A Treatise on Homiletics: Designed to Illustrate the Theory and Practice of Preaching the Gospel*, (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1864); among others.

Brazilian Catholic Priest, Father Diogo Antônio Feijó.²³ Kidder retells his encounter in *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil*:

On my asking how the ex-regent [Father Feijó], and others like him, would regard the circulation of the Scriptures among the people; he said they would rejoice in it, and that the propriety of the enterprise would scarcely admit of discussion. "Then," said I, "when we are engaged in this work, we can have the satisfaction to know that we are doing what the better part of your own clergy approve." "Certainly," he replied, "you are doing what we ought to be doing ourselves."²⁴

Kidder's account may be too optimistic,²⁵ and yet, these and other accounts say a lot about the level of confidence and excitement with which Methodist

²³ According to Barbosa, the General Assembly had elected Father Feijó as Sole Regent in October 1835, and he resigned in September of 1837 (Barbosa, pg. 42; endnote, #53).

²⁴ Kidder, 317. In a different account, Kidder also meets with the General Assembly of Brazil, where he had a similar encouraging experience: "They received me with gratifying expressions of regard towards the United States, and assurances of entire reciprocity of feeling towards Christians who might not be of the roman Church. They were acquainted with, and appreciated the efforts of the Bible societies; they moreover highly approved of the universal use of the Scriptures, especially the New Testament. They pronounced the offer I was about to make to be not only unexceptionable, but truly generous; and said that nothing in their power should be wanting to carry it into full effect" (Kidder, 322). Important to note, however, is that Kidder is in the presence of Roman Catholic clergy who also function as political figures. Important to note, however, is that Kidder is in the presence of Roman Catholic clergy who also function as political figures.

²⁵ Optimistic because Kidder also mentions the opposition with which he was received. Before this event he explained that a periodical by Roman Catholic clergy titled, *O Catholico*, arose in order to combat the "evangelical operations" of bible distribution in Brazil (Kidder, 140). According to Braga & Grubb, many of the first literary works against Protestantism in Brazil were published between 1837 and 1839, primarily by Father Luiz Gonçalves dos Santos; see his *Dessaggravo do Clero e do Povo Catholico ou Refutação das Mentiras e Calumnias do Impostor que se intitule Missionario* [Vindication of the Catholic Clergy and the People, or Refutation of Lies and Calumnies of the Impostor that Entitles Missionary], (Rio: I. P. Costa, 1837); *Antidoto Catholico contra o Veneno Methodistista ou Refutação do Telatoria de P. G. Tilbury* [Catholic Antidote Against Poison or Refutation of the Methodist Telatoria P. G. Tilbury], (Rio: I.P. Costa 1838); and *O Catholico e o Methodistista* [The Catholic and Methodist], (Rio: I. P. Costa, 1839).

missionaries saw their colporteur work and their Protestant identity in Brazil.

The individuals that Kidder encountered, however, were more likely enticed by the idea of progress, higher education, and U.S. American values (which at this point, were synonymous with Protestantism); rather than a genuine interest in the dissemination of the bibles and evangelistic tracts, albeit cases may well exist. For example, Laura Jarnagin, identifies a man by the name of Aurelio Cândido Tavares Bastos (1839-1875) who founded the *Sociedade Internacional de Imigração* (International Immigration Society) in order to allow U.S. American Southerners to immigrate into Brazil. The immigration of these Southerners, subsequently, would allow the Methodist Episcopal Church, South to have a missionary monopoly over Brazil until the 1930's.²⁶ Interestingly, Jarnagin also mentions that Tavares Bastos would become personal friends with Presbyterian missionary, James C. Fletcher (1823-1901), co-author of *Brazil and Brazilians* with Kidder.

Unfortunately, Kidder would not remain in Brazil for too long. By 1840, Cynthia Russell, (Kidder's wife), died of yellow fever. She was buried in Brazil in the Gambôa Protestant Cemetery. Soon after, Kidder left Brazil and returned to the United States with his two small children (other sources say, one son). Relatively speaking, the time that Kidder spent in Brazil (1837-1840) was not much longer than Pitts; however, the strategy that

²⁶ Jarnagin, Laura, "Fitting In, Relocating Family and Capital within the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World Economy: The Brazilian Connection" in *The Confederados: Old South Immigrants in Brazil*, edited by Cyrus B. Dawsey and James M. Dawsey, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1995), 76.

Kidder employed in his missionary enterprise differed vastly. The sources in this paper show that it was due to Kidder's missionary work, that Methodists were able to flourish their presence in Brazil. Spaulding remained in Brazil until 1841, when the Methodist Episcopal Church withdrew completely.

IV. Methodist Retrieval (1840-1841)

Secondary sources do not really elaborate on the retrieval of Methodism in Brazil. The time period, however, is quite telling. The initial proposals for the schism of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844 must have taken precedence over any missionary activity; more importantly, the regions that were, at one point, part of one denomination would be consequently divided between North and South. According to Morton and Reily, the Missionary Society could not maintain the financial stability of the mission in Brazil.²⁷ The Annual Report of 1842 of the Methodist Episcopal Missionary Society regretted "to say that this mission [South America] has been given up. But the state of the treasury has not warranted the continuance of a mission which only gave a distant promise of the consummation of the object for which it was established—the illumination of the benighted, and if possible, worse than heathen countries of South America."²⁸

The Methodists would not be able to ransom this mission until after 1867, when a confederate, who was unhappy with the results of the Civil War, immigrated to Brazil, with fellow colleagues, and became a preacher

²⁷ Morton, 11; Reily, 2223.

²⁸ Annual Report of the Missionary Society, pg. 14-15

for the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South: Junius E. Newman.²⁹

V. Conclusion

The story of early Methodism in Brazil was exciting and filled with missionary opportunity. In this essay, I have shown that the homogenization strategies of these pioneering individuals were, in fact, a healthy and normative procedure that eventually engendered fruitful evangelical interactions, which Methodist missionaries experienced, provided positive renewing among European immigrants; and also that the Roman Catholic learning experiences that espoused ecumenical interactions. I have pointed out an important strategic factor, however: the early endeavors of the Methodist Episcopal Church were based on following the merchant trades that were established in South America through the Church of England in the early nineteenth century.

Abstract

Este artículo examina la interacción entre los misioneros metodistas episcopales (antes de la división de la Iglesia Metodista) en Brasil y su conexión con los inmigrantes ingleses. En su mayor parte, muchos de los esfuerzos misioneros iniciales se hicieron con estos inmigrantes ingleses y

²⁹ Dawsey, James M, "The Methodist: The Southern Migrants and the Methodist Mission" in *The Confederados: Old South Immigrants in Brazil*, edited by Cyrus B. Dawsey and James M. Dawsey (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1995), 116; see also, Carter, David, "Newman, Junius E." vol. 2 in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, edited by Nolan B. Harmon, 1749 (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 1749.

con comerciantes que distribuían/compraban productos en la zona. No fue hasta que una ola posterior de misioneros de los Estados Unidos, que los ciudadanos de Brasil fueron objetos de proselitismo. Por su parte los misioneros Estadounidenses, con la difusión de material vernáculo, estos misioneros metodistas, encontraron una reacción en contra de su trabajo, sobre todo del clero católico.

Book Review

David Maldonado, Jr.

In the Country of Empty Crosses: The Story of a Hispano Protestant Family in Catholic New Mexico. Arturo Madrid. Trinity University Press, San Antonio, 2012.

The personal and familial stories of being *protestantes* in the midst of a Catholic social and religious context are getting more attention. Although Hispanic Protestantism has already begun to receive scholarly attention, the human stories are just beginning to surface. The story of the Madrid family in Northern New Mexico is one such story. This volume is the memoir and personal reflections by Dr. Arturo Madrid of his experiences and those of his family and ancestors who, as early Presbyterians in a Catholic New Mexico learned to navigate the challenging situation of being Protestants in the midst of a strong Catholic society. His story is beautifully told with a rich description of the historical context (1800s) including the past and current state of villages in northern New Mexico.

Dr. Madrid, the Norine R. and T. Frank Mutchison Distinguished Professor of Humanities and director of the Mexico, the Americas, and Spain Program at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas takes the reader on a reflective journey through the villages of his ancestors visiting old home sites, churches, cemeteries and many other historical sites that hold the stories of the early converts of early Hispanos to Protestantism and especially Presbyterianism. Reading his story is to join him on the historical tour of how early Hispanos lived out their lives faithful to their new found religious identity, while being active members of the broader Hispano cultural communities. In addition, at various points Dr. Madrid offers insights to how early Hispano Presbyterians were also challenged in their relationship and interaction with Anglo Presbyterians. An important personal revelation is the struggle that the author experienced with his sense of calling to ministry and his decision to seek another professional career.

A moving aspect of this volume is accompanying Dr. Madrid on his trek in search of the villages, homesteads, and cemeteries of his Protestant ancestors. As he revisits villages, some of which are by now essentially ghost towns, insights are offered to how Protestant identity among Hispano affected even where they lived. Many relocated to communities such as Las Vegas to seek fellowship and support among fellow Hispano Protestants and leave behind painful treatment from Hispano Catholics in the villages and rural areas. Converting to Protestantism affected relations with the broader Hispanic community. The sense of being interlopers and called "herejes" shaped a life of separation and rejection. In response, "Hispano converts to Protestantism had to erect psychological barriers to protect themselves from the hostility of their former coreligionists, who now called them herejes and worse." Even in death, Hispano Protestantes were buried in separate cemeteries despairingly called "campoherejes" instead of the village cemeteries that were essentially Catholic cemeteries. Part of that defense was a strong sense of being "as superior in their thinking, values, and behaviors to shield themselves against religious antagonism."

Yet, early Hispano Protestants were subject to Anglo-American racial ideology which defined them, as socially and biologically inferior thus less than the Anglos and thus unworthy. Thus, early Hispano Protestants "found themselves between two worlds: one that was hostile to them because they were apostates and another that kept them at arm's length because they were manifestly the other." They experienced rejection by both Hispano Catholics and Anglo Protestants. They formed their own congregations and where there was no Hispano congregation, they attended quietly Anglo churches. Nonetheless, they affirmed their new found faith and identity, and lived according to the Protestant values. A clear character of the lives of Hispano Protestants included the spiritual practices of weekly worship, prayer, meditation, and the study of the bible.

The Presbyterian missionaries and school teachers did an excellent job of inculcating a deep piety in the lives of early Hispano Protestants. Behaviors such as smoking, dancing, and drinking alcoholic beverages were strictly forbidden and were not considered appropriate for a good Christian life. In

restraining from such social behaviors, Hispanic Protestants consequently withdrew from much of the Hispanic community and social life.

Another contribution of Protestant missionaries in shaping the lives and character of early Hispano converts was the emphasis on education. Presbyterians established schools throughout northern New Mexico which competed with Catholic schools. A goal for many Protestant families was to send their children to Presbyterian schools. As a result, Hispano Protestants soon emerged as a literate population with a solid educational foundation and produced a generation of educated professionals including educators and public servants. Dr. Madrid's family is an excellent example of this phenomenon. His father was an educator and his mother was a public official.

The story of early Hispano Presbyterians in northern New Mexico is a graphic reminder of the challenges that early Protestants faced and the social price that they paid as a result of their conversion to Protestantism. Rejection from Hispano neighbors on the one hand and rejection from Anglo Protestants on the other left the early Protestants living in an isolated social and religious island. It was a painful life, yet one to which the Hispano Protestants felt compelled to live as converts to a new faith, religious life, values, and personal behaviors. It was a courageous generation who in spite of being called heretics and knowing rejection remained faithful to their new sense of knowing God.

Arturo Madrid has made a significant contribution to our understanding and appreciation of Hispanic Protestantism especially of the human and family stories behind the emergence of Hispanic Protestantism. This book is a must read for not just Hispanic Protestants, but also for the church and society at large. It is the story of the human spirit and community. It is the story of the power of religious faith and identity within that empowers individuals, families, and communities. But it is also as the story of how religious identities can affect and sadly divide the human community. Dr. Madrid offers a descriptive reflection of the challenges that our ancestors faced. Yet, he closes by pointing to an emerging spirit among Hispanos as new generations seek their expressions and forms of faith.

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